

Assessment of Dementia

Global Deterioration Scale

Adapted for Families

1. No cognitive decline

- The person seems normal to everyone
- There are no complaints of memory loss from the person
- Their functional abilities have not lessened

2. Very mild cognitive decline (age associated memory impairment)

- Changes in short-term memory
- Depression - may refuse treatment
- Conflict with others (marital conflict)
- Increasing frustration, increased anger
- Symptoms seen as willful or purposeful
- Problems with employers
- Refuses treatment for depression

3. Mild cognitive decline (mild cognitive impairment)

- Losses or changes in the ability to:
 - Manage employment
 - Manage money
 - Drive safely (gets lost, makes mistakes, fender benders)
 - Shop and make change
 - Plan vacations and trips
 - Comprehend complex written materials
 - Understand phone scams, ordering from catalogues, or subscribing to appropriate magazines may become a problem.
 - Perform chores. Those with power implements (snow blowers, saws, gas tanks) become unsafe.
 - Social participation may change

4. Moderate cognitive decline (mild dementia)

- Cleaning
- Cooking
- Thermostat
- Withdrawal from complex tasks
- Loss of sense of "risk"
- Withdrawal from high stimulus activities and social activities
- Increased irritability and self-absorption
- Difficulty with planning
- High degree of awareness, yet may be denial
- Anger with lost activities
- Loss of sense of humor

5. Moderately severe cognitive decline (moderate dementia)

- Bathing - starts with resistance
- Catastrophic behaviors become more regular
- Grooming
- Selecting clothing
 - Wears same clothing all the time
 - Changes clothing frequently
 - Odd combinations
- May forget names of close family members (grandchildren)
 - Non-recognition of TV, mirrors, pictures, objects
 - Personal withdrawal from activities and people
 - Decreasing awareness
 - Increased visual-perceptual deficits and recognition, complaints that glasses need changed
 - Sensitivity to noise, avoidance of groups
 - Clings to caregiver
 - Repetitive behaviors
 - Decline in language ability
 - Resistance to intimacy
 - Child-like affect
 - Pacing, wandering
 - Day/night patterns disturbed

6. Severe cognitive decline (moderately severe dementia)

- Toileting
- Ambulation (walking)
 - Getting “glued” to floor
 - Falling
 - Shuffling
 - Coasting from object to object
 - Difficulty rising from chair
- Toddler-like affect
- Eating with fingers
- Occasional problems with recognition of spouse

7. Very Severe cognitive decline (severe dementia)

- Loss of ability to move about purposefully, i.e. pushing a wheelchair
- Brain no longer seems to be able to tell the body what to do
- Loss of regular verbal communication
- Dependence in all activities of daily living
- Loss of recognition of family members except during moments of clarity
- Spontaneous behaviors, such as yelling
- Generalized rigidity
- Complications of immobility and medical complications
 - Weight loss
 - Skin breakdown
 - Repeated infections
 - Aspiration
 - Falls from bed (rollouts or climb-outs)
- Seizures, additional neurological problems
- Needs to be fed